

*The Kaluha Hill in the District of Hazaribagh.*—By NUNDOLAL DEY,  
*Munsif, Tamluk.*

[ Read April, 1901.]

[This paper was received by the Society in December, 1900. In the meantime Dr. M. A. Stein has published in the *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXX, 1901, March, p. 90 ff. a much more complete and accurate account on the Kaluha Hill, incorporating the results of a visit paid by him to this site in October, 1899. Notwithstanding this, the article by Babu Nundolal Dey is published here, as he has the credit of having first attempted to give a complete account of this site of antiquarian interest, of which previously only little was known. But for all the details in his paper, the reader should at the same time consult Dr. Stein's article, above referred to.—*Ed.*]

The Kaluha hill was visited by me on the 21st April, 1899. The Kaluha-pāhār, properly so called, forms the western boundary of a secluded and romantic valley situated on the eastern bank of the Lilajan river. It is situated in the district of Hazaribagh about 26 miles to the south of Buddha-Gaya, and 16 miles to the north of Chatra, and 6 miles from the Jori out-post of the Huntarganj Thana. The nearest village from the hill is Dantār at the distance of about a mile and a half. The valley is surrounded by hills on all sides, and is accessible only by two paths, one leading from the eastern side and the other from the western, that is, from the side of the Lilajan river. The eastern path is the easier of the two, though it passes through boulders of rocks and blocks of stones, as it takes a winding course over the hills, whereas the other path from the Lilajan side passes over the steep side of the rock. Though all the hills surrounding the valley are known by the name of the Kaluha hills, yet the name of *Kaluha-pāhār*, properly so called, is confined only to the range on the western side of the valley. My present remarks relate only to this western range, as the pilgrims and visitors do not see the other parts of the valley.

From the entrance over the eastern hill of the valley to the top of the western range or *Kaluha-pāhār*, it takes more than an hour to go. The intermediate space is dotted with small hills, knolls and low plateaus which add to the picturesqueness and grandeur of the whole

scenery. The western hill is the highest of all the hills that surround the valley; and the narrow path takes a winding course over the dizzy height of the steep rock amidst boulders which, from the entrance to the top of the hill, are marked with vermilion so that one may not lose his way. But the hill can be ascended by means of a *dooli*, as I did, if proper arrangement be made beforehand of men to take it up.

As the top of the western hill is approached, figures of Buddha in the conventional form of meditation are seen sculptured here and there on the rock. Just on the top of the hill, at the termination of the path, there is a narrow doorway in good order, 4 cubits in length, situated in the centre of a wall of hewn stones, which connect on either side the high precipices which form the natural wall of the place. Thus it will be seen that if the door, as there was evidently one before in the doorway, be closed, it would shut out all ingress into the top of the hill, except by the entrance on the western side of the hill which I mentioned before. The eastern doorway leads to a level landing-place which was evidently the court-yard of some building now in ruins, and the building is said to have been the residence of Rājā Virāta of the Mahābhārata. There is no artificial wall on the northern side of this range, as the towering precipitous rocks on this side form the natural wall; but on the western side overlooking the Lilajan, there are vestiges of walls of similar hewn stones filling up the interstices between high rocks, thus forming a continuous line of wall. There is a similar doorway, as above described, five cubits in length in the wall on this side also; and I have not the slightest doubt that formerly there was a flight of steps from this doorway leading down to the river Lilajan which laved the side of the hill before, though it has now receded a little further to the west. There are remains also of a similar stone wall on the southern side of this range.

The enclosure thus formed is more than one-fourth of a mile in length from north to south, and about one thousand paces in breadth from east to west. I speak of the measurements by guess only. This enclosure is divided in the middle by a deep ravine which has got its declivity from the north to the south. Though the ravine is now dry, yet on the northern side, notwithstanding its declivity to the south, the water has scooped out for itself a hollow resting place forming a beautiful pond about 200 cubits in length, overgrown with lotus plants and other water-weeds. The temple of Kuleçvarī is situated on the hill on the western side of the ravine, and on the eastern side of the ravine there is a wide plateau running up to the eastern border of the Kaluha-pāhār, rising in two tiers. This western hill and the plateau on the two sides of the ravine extend only to a short distance to the



south from the southern border of the pond ; and at the southern side and on the southern portion of the enclosure there are other detached hills of which I shall speak hereafter.

Though the enclosure above described forms a natural stronghold, yet I did not find the remains of any fortress within it, excepting the slight trace of a battlement on the south-eastern wall. On the north-western side of the hill situated on the western side of the ravine, and not far from the western doorway above described overlooking the Lilajan river, is the temple of the goddess Kuleçvarī which means the Lady of the Kula mountain. It is a small homely square building facing east with a dome surmounting it : it consists only of two small rooms, and in the inner room the image of the goddess is placed in a niche in the central part of the western wall. The image of Kuleçvarī is the image of the fourhanded Durgā in her *Mahīṣa-mardinī* form and it is one cubit in height. Two fairs are held here every year in the months of Caitra and Āçvina, when, I understand, people from Gaya, Benares, Mirzapur and Chapra come to visit the shrine.

Just outside the temple at its northern side below a Pipal tree (*Ficus religiosa*), I found some dozen figures of Buddha in the meditative posture, but they are all in a mutilated condition, though they can be distinctly recognised as figures of Buddha. A small piece of stone among them contains a sculpture of the birth of Buddha in the lower compartment and his death in the upper, but the figures have become so much mutilated and obliterated that they can hardly be recognised. There were also two fragments of a frieze with small images of Buddha carved upon them. The Pāndās told me that formerly many such figures in the meditative attitude abounded the place, but they have been taken away gradually by the persons who visit the shrine.

At a short distance to the south of the temple of Kuleçvarī and on the same hill, is a small low cell facing west formed by two boulders of rock with a stone slab on the top of them. One must creep inside the cell to get a view of the image there. It contains an image which is worshipped as the image of Bhairoji. But on close inspection it was found to be the Jaina image of Pārçvanātha in the posture of meditation with the usual row of snake-heads on the top of the head. I could not make out whether the image was of white or black stone, as a thick coating of black paint has been laid upon it to make it appear glossy and shiny. Just in front of this cell and at a distance of only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cubits, is the back of another low small cell similarly formed : it contains a stone image of Buddha in the same contemplative attitude : the face has been mutilated, and the broken part has been smeared



with vermilion. But the hanging lobe of the ear and the matted top-knot on the head and other indications are sufficient to identify it with the image of Buddha. This image is not worshipped notwithstanding the vermilion paint, and the Pāndās told me if I liked I could remove it, indicating that they did not care for the image at all.

From this hill to the opposite side to the plateau, the dry bed of the ravine should be crossed. On coming to the slope of the plateau, one meets with a small cavern, the circular mouth of which is one cubit in diameter and three or four cubits in depth with little or no water in it: this is called the Sūrya-kunḍa or Pātāla-Gaṅgā. On the side of it is an image of Buddha. At a short distance from it, there are some figures of Buddha grouped together in one place. But it is evident that they are not *in situ*, and all of them are mutilated in some part of the body or other.

At a very short distance higher up on the north-eastern side in the same tier of the plateau, is a small temple (10 cubits by 10 cubits) with a domed top, standing on a rectangular terrace about two cubits in height from the ground. The temple faces north and it consists of the sanctum only. In the centre of the southern wall, there is a niche which contains a broken image of Buddha covered with heaps of small stones. The head, the arms and the trunk were broken: the arms were missing, but when I joined the head and portions of the trunk to the pedestal over which were the hands in the meditative posture upon the cross-legs, they made up an entire figure of Buddha. I was given to understand that whoever visits this temple throws a stone at the image. This is very significant. If it ever be proved that the temples and other buildings of the Buddhist period of this place have been destroyed,—and the destruction was not brought about by any natural causes,—it was certainly owing to Hindu hatred and not to Moslem bigotry.

On the north-west of this temple, there is a brick plinth of an oblong building called the *Baiṭhak*, 27 cubits in length from north to south by 10 cubits in breadth from east to west. It was evidently a large hall, as I did not find any sign of a partition-wall; but at the same time I did not find any indication of cells on any side.

Higher up on the same plateau but in the upper tier, there are the remains of a brick building (12 cubits by 10 cubits), which appeared to me to be a temple, which faced west as is clear from the flight of steps that led into it, but there was evidently a door also on the northern side. Just to the north of this building I found nine mortices on the surface of the level rock placed in three rows, indicating that there was a wooden frame-work which evidently served as a nave to the



temple. Behind this building and extending almost up to the eastern border of the western range, there is a brick plinth of an oblong building called the *Sabhā-Baiṭhak*, which is 58 cubits in length by 18 cubits in breadth. I could not find here also any vestige within of a partition wall or cells on any side. At a distance of about 50 cubits to the north-east of the *Sabhā-Baiṭhak* there are the remains of another oblong plinth, 21 cubits by 12 cubits. The whole of this upper tier is called *Māruā-Māruī*. Within the space enclosed by the mortices, there are several lines of an inscription engraved on the surface of the rock in Sanskrit, but so much obliterated by exposure as to have become nearly illegible. But it is clear that the commencing word is "Samvat," though I could not make out the date. It is said that at this place Virāta's daughter Uttarā was married.

To the north of the *Māruā-Māruī* and at the north-eastern corner of this range which I have called the western range of the valley, there is a precipitous rock which sharply rises against the sky. This is called the *Ākāṣalocana*: it is the highest peak in the whole range. In the central part of the *Ākāṣalocana*, there are 10 seated figures of Buddha carved in one place on the rock; each figure has got the figure of a woman on either side with *chowry* in hand. There are inscriptions in Sanskrit on the top of this row of figures, and I think some of the letters are fairly legible, and I could read some of them, though I could not make out any sense from them: a competent antiquarian, however, would I suppose be able to decipher them. Immediately below this row, there is a row of carved animals as elephants, horses and lions. A little further on there are five seated figures of Dhyāni Buddhas and five standing figures of Buddhas or Bodhisattvas carved in another place on the rock in one row, and there are inscriptions above and below the standing figures and between them. I could make out the figures "22" though I could not read the two preceding figures after the word "Samvat." Below this row, there are figures of animals as above described in one row:

I am quite sure that a competent antiquarian would yet be able to make out the dates of these inscriptions from the inscriptions themselves, though many of the letters have worn off and become illegible.

I could not, on account of my weak health, get upon the top of this hill (*Ākāṣalocana*), but I have been told by those who have visited the peak that a little further up from the rows of figures above described, there are the remains of a brick chamber 18 cubits in length by 12 cubits in breadth, the bricks of which are of very large size. If this be so, there can be no doubt about the antiquity of the place. On the top of this hill beyond a narrow perpendicular fissure which has severed the



hill into two parts, there are two impressions of feet—evidently of Buddha—carved on a boulder which could be seen from below.

On the southern side of the enclosure, that is to the south of the hill on which the temple of Kuleçvari and the cell of Bhaironāth are situated, and to the south of the hollow trough forming the pond, there is a hill on the side of the Lilajan, on which are to be seen the remains of a colonnaded hall. On the south-eastern side of this hill, there is another detached hill called the *Sātgharwā*, which is remarkable for its very curious boulders and cells. There can be no doubt that at some very remote period this hill was subjected to a very severe earthquake which shivered it into fragments, and which caused the fissure on the top of the *Ākāçalocana* on the northern side of the range. The huge boulders that are scattered about with boulders on their tops form very excellent cells where persons can live with convenience, and the cool breeze that blows through them during the hottest part of the day, induces the visitor to have his mid-day siesta here.

It will be remarked that excepting the image of Kuleçvari, I did not come across the image of a single deity belonging to the Hindu Pantheon. The place is entirely Buddhistic. It is my strong conviction that Kaluha-pābār is the *Makula Parvata* of the Burmese annals of Buddhism. Buddha is said to have passed his sixth Wasso (or rainy-season retirement) on the *Makula* mountain (see Bigandet's *Life or Legend of Gaudama*). *Kaluha* is simply a contraction and corruption of *Makula*, the letter म (*Ma*) of मकुल (*Makula*) having dropped by lapse of time, and the word *Kula* changed into *Kaluha* according to the guttural pronunciation of the people of the district. The word *Kula*, however, still exists in the name of the goddess Kuleçvari (*Kula + içvari*) which means, as I have stated, the Lady of the Mountain *Kula*. Its propinquity to Buddha-Gaya and perhaps its situation near the ancient road to Rājagṛha or Çrāvastī which was often visited by Buddha, might possibly have led him to select this secluded spot as a fit place for passing the customary rainy-season retirement on the sixth year after attaining the Buddhahood. I have been told that a few years ago, when the dispute about the Buddha-Gaya temple was going on, the Burmese tried unsuccessfully to get a lease of the hill from the Pāndās and the proprietor. But I cannot vouchsafe for the truth of this statement. The known sanctity of the place as being the temporary residence of Buddha and its natural strong position, perhaps, led a neighbouring chieftain professing the Buddhist faith to fix his residence here at a later period. There can be no doubt, however, that the Brahmins appropriated this sacred place of the Buddhists and set up an image of Durgā, perhaps after the expulsion of Buddhism. They either

deliberately concocted the story that the place was the site of Rājā Virāta's palace in order to conceal its Buddhistic origin, or they were led to the belief by the five figures of Buddha, either seated or standing, carved on the hill of *Akāṣalocana*, which they took to be the images of the five Pāṇḍavas who had taken refuge in the court of Virāta.

I feel quite confident that if proper measures be taken for the exploration of this place and the decipherment of the inscriptions before they get further obliterated by a competent antiquarian, it would not only elucidate the name of the place and fix the date of the sculptures and buildings, but throw much light upon many matters which are yet hazy and doubtful.

